

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
----- 114889
O 210850Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9602
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7567

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, KS, KN
SUBJECT: KOREA AT 31ST UNGA: PRO DPRK APPROACH REGARDING
WITHDRAWAL OF RESOLUTIONS

REF: (A) USUN 3834, (B) USUN 3847

BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY DISCUSSED HOSTILE RESOLUTION
WITHDRAWAL PROPOSAL WITH MOFA. MOFA ORIGINALLY INTENDED
TO KEEP STORY OUT OF PRESS BUT SUBSEQUENT COVERAGE BY ALL
WIRE SERVICES APPARENTLY FORCED ABANDONMENT THIS EFFORT AS
AFTERNOON PAPERS HEADLINED STORY. END SUMMARY.

1. POLCOUNS AND EMBOFF DISCUSSED ROMANIAN APPROACH (REF A)
WITH MOFA AMERICAN BUREAU DIRECTOR AND UN DIVISION CHIEF
YI CHONG-BIN RESPECTIVELY MORNING SEPTEMBER 21 AND URGED
THAT MOFA ENDEAVOR TO KEEP STORY OUT OF PRESS AND ONCE STORY
BROKE NOT TO PLAY UP PROPOSED WITHDRAWAL AS TRIUMPH. YI SAID
MOFA HAD INSTRUCTIONS FROM FOREIGN MINISTER PARK TONG-JIN TO
BLACK OUT ALL NEWS ON THIS SUBJECT FROM NEW YORK. WHILE
EMBOFF WAS PRESENT YI RELAYED THESE INSTRUCTIONS TO MOFA
SPOKESMAN. YI SAID ROK PAPERS WOULD NOT CARRY STORY.

2. THIS STRATEGY WAS ABANDONED WHEN MOST WIRE SERVICES
BROKE NEWS. ALL AFTERNOON PAPERS SEPTEMBER 21 HEADLINED STORY
THAT COMMUNIST SIDE WOULD WITHDRAW HOSTILE UNGA KOREA RESOLUTION.
REPORTS FROM REUTERS, AP AND HAPDONG DATELINED UN AND
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QUOTING "INFORMED SOURCES AT UN HEADQUARTERS" SAID

NORTH KOREA (NK) HAD ASKED CO-SPONSORS TO WITHDRAW COMMUNIST RESOLUTION. COMMUNIST COUNTRIES ACCEPTANCE THIS PROPOSAL WILL PROBABLY MEAN WESTERN COUNTRIES WILL ALSO WITHDRAW THEIR RESOLUTION, ACCORDING TO ROK PRESS. STORIES SAY FORMAL LETTER STATING REASONS FOR HOSTILE RESOLUTION WITHDRAWAL WILL BE SUBMITTED TO UN SEPTEMBER 21, BRINGING ABOUT AVOIDANCE OF KOREA DEBATE AT 31ST UNGA. UN SOURCES ARE VARIOUSLY CITED AS SPECULATING THAT NK MOVE CAUSED BY EITHER NK "INTERNAL SITUATION", POSSIBLE DECLINE IN UN SUPPORT OR RESERVATIONS ON KOREA RESOLUTION AT COLOMBO NAAC.

3. DESPITE EMBASSY'S REQUEST THAT STORY NOT BE PLAYED AS TRIUMPH, INDEPENDENT SHINA ILBO HAS TERMED DEVELOPMENT "TRIUMPH OF ROK UN STRATEGY." POLCOUNS HAS AGAIN CONTACTED AMERICAN BUREAU DIRECTOR TO URGE THAT ROKG AVOID PORTRAYING WITHDRAWAL AS ROK DIPLOMATIC VICTORY.

4. COMMENT: ON THIS ISSUE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ROKG WILL ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO CONTAIN PRESS EXHUBERANCE, OR THAT, ONCE PRESS GETS STARTED, THEY WILL MAKE MORE THAN A HALF-HEARTED EFFORT. WE WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO PRESS STRONGLY FOR ROKG RESTRAINT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, UNGA RESOLUTIONS, THE PRESS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SEOUL07567
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760356-0168
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760936/aaaabfds.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 USUN NEW YORK 3834, 76 USUN NEW YORK 3847
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 MAY 2004 by woolflhd>; APPROVED <15 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KOREA AT 31ST UNGA: PRO DPRK APPROACH REGARDING WITHDRAWAL OF RESOLUTIONS
TAGS: PFOR, KS, KN, UNGA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006